

## NEW BOOKS.

Dr. Mitchell's Washington.

Dr. S. Weir Mitchell tells a story of a great historical character in "The Youth of Washington" (The Century Company). He tells it in the form of an autobiography. The reserve which so long surrounded the accounts of Washington has been a good deal broken down in recent years. It seems a little curious, still, to find Washington writing, as we read here (page 15):

"It is certain that my great-grandfather in some respects possessed qualities which resembled those which I myself possess. He was a man of great personal strength, inclined to war, very resolute and of a masterful and very violent temper."

Here is something that Washington must have known in regard to himself. Any American child knows from his school history that Washington was large, strong and masterful, and that he exhibited temper at Monmouth. But was it not courageous for Washington to say so? Few biographers of themselves have had the fortitude of Marie Bashkirtseff or of the ingenious maiden in Mr. W. S. Gilbert's play, who described herself as a "very, very beautiful girl. One may know such things, but one ordinarily is disinclined, having taken the pen in hand. The more honor to Washington that he was in all circumstances incapable of concealment. We should have hated to have the Bashkirtseff or the Gilbert girl get ahead of him."

We have seen little recorded that revealed Washington's humorous side, and we are glad to find here what he set down in regard to one Martha Washington, who emigrated to Virginia and married Nicholas Haywood of Westmoreland. Says George Washington of this pioneer kinwoman: "She left her property to her cousins John and Lawrence, and a gold twenty shilling piece to each, and to their sons each a father bed and furniture, and their heirs forever, which she does appear to me for a bed to last." We pass from this to a paragraph which must hereafter unconsciously and rather violently recur to us whenever we see the well known and pathetic picture of Washington saying good-bye to his mother. Says Washington here:

"My father considered, I believe, that as I was a younger son and must in some way support myself I should be well trained in both mind and body, and had lived the chance of the former might have been better. The latter was often made difficult by my mother, who was unhappy when I was subject to the risks to which all lads of spirit are exposed. I remember that when later my father was teaching me to leap my pony, my pony refused over and over, and this being near to the house my mother ran out, and at last had a kind of hysterical turn. My father sat still on a big stallion, and took no notice of her entreaties. At last I got the pony over, and he fell with me. I jumped up and was in the saddle in a moment. My father said that was ill ridden. I must try it again; and upon this my mother ran back to the house, crying out I would be murdered. But my father was this manner of man: he hated defeat, while my mother was ever desirous of keeping me out of danger, because it made her uncomfortable, and this was strange, for I have never been able to see that she was greatly pleased when I was successful, or was much moved by what the Great Master allowed me to attain in later years."

A stolid mother, and yet she looks so much what she should be in the picture. Some times we wonder if we like history. We try to be patient with it.

Washington's brother, Lawrence, was a picturesque letter writer. He was with Admiral Vernon and Gen. Wentworth in the vain attack on Cartagena. We judge that he knew who was to blame for that fiasco, young George, who often fully informed in matters of the kind. We are mistaken as to the sentiments of his family, and as to his own sentiments, if they were not to the effect that the expedition would have fared better if a younger and unacknowledged soldier had had command of it. Gen. Shafter succeeded in getting into Santiago, but we recall that Mr. Richard Harding Davis cut him up similarly. Lawrence Washington wrote:

"HONORED AND DEAR FATHER: What with dissensions between the Gen. Wentworth and Admiral Vernon, who was, as we think, not to blame, we have come away, leaving the Spaniards to crow, and our Col. Gooch ill at Jamaica. When I am to have letter doctors of glory I pray to have letter doctors of glory."

We were to storm Fort Lazaro—which must mean Lazaro—at night. But we were too long getting there, or the guides treacherous, and the ladders too short and no sufficient breach. This Lazaro fort was too much alive, but we were actually on the rampart when Col. Grant was killed, and we were driven back in confusion, and half of us, a good thousand, killed or wounded for want of forethought. I came off with no more hurt than to be so spent that I had no breath to curse the folly for which so many brave men died. The climate was worse than the done, and we took ship with our tails between our legs and a couple of two and shaking with agues and racked with fever."

We have no doubt that the young letter writer had a good right to be censorious; we remark, however, that he did not rebuke his General for neglecting to provide the storming column with canned tomatoes, and we must think Wentworth fortunate above Shafter accordingly.

More than once in this autobiography we notice that frankness of which we have spoken, and which, when it seems a little curious even in the case of so open a man as Washington. At page 43, for instance, we read:

"At this period my great personal strength and endurance were constant temptations to forbidden enterprises on land or water, and it was at this time of my life that I discovered a certain pleasure in danger. I find it difficult, not having the philosophical turn of mind to describe what I mean; but of this I became aware as time went on, that in battle or other risks I was suddenly the master of larger competence of mind and body than I possessed at other times. When, on one occasion, the learned Dr. Franklin desired to be excused if he asked whether in battle I had ever felt fear, I had to confess that in contemplating danger I was like most men, but that, immediately upon the onset, the influence which liquor had upon some, making them feel able for anything. He said yes, but as to the influence of drink, that was a mere delusion; whereas he understood, and here he begged to apologize, that in great danger in battle and when the ranks were breaking I had seemed to possess powers of decision and swift judgment beyond those I could ordinarily command. I said it was true, that danger seemed to lift me in mind and above my common level, and that it was the satisfaction this gave which made danger agreeable; not, he said, the peril, but the results. I apprehend him to have been correct, for in battle I have often felt this, as at Monmouth, at Princeton and elsewhere."

We must say that we have found it in-

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